



## Save the date Governor's Housing Conference is coming to Richmond

The Governor's Housing Conference, Virginia's largest and most comprehensive affordable housing event of the year, is making its way to the Capital this year, and will be held at the Richmond Marriott Nov. 17 – 19.

Each year the conference features workshops and sessions designed to help public and private sector representatives develop effective housing solutions in Virginia. Nearly 900 affordable housing advocates, providers, and policy makers gather each year for this event.

More information is available online at: [www.vagovernorshousingconference.com](http://www.vagovernorshousingconference.com).



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## Letter from the director

Quality of life for Virginians is affected by many things – jobs, health and safety,



**Bill Shelton**  
Director

education, the environment - and just as importantly access to safe and affordable housing.

For many years the housing community throughout Virginia has advocated for a comprehensive housing policy. A strategy that addresses all aspects of housing, and how it relates to other policy areas to form the basis of communities in which Virginians can live, work, and raise their families.

In April, Governor Bob McDonnell took the first step toward creating this policy when he issued an executive order calling for the establishment of the first statewide housing

policy for the Commonwealth of Virginia. He made this announcement while touring Lincoln Mews, a previously neglected apartment community revitalized by the Better Housing Coalition that now provides quality workforce and low-income housing.

While there has been a growing call for increased workforce housing and the need for increased accessible and special needs housing, a statewide housing policy must address a range of issues. To be successful, this effort will need to take a broad-based approach and focus on how housing policy is inextricably tied to economic development, transportation, education, and the environment.

Housing is a key sector of Virginia's economy. Many believe that housing was a major factor in the current recession and must be addressed if the economy is to fully recover. While we will be looking across a range of housing issues, this policy will focus on areas where the state can make a difference and show progress in helping our citizens to achieve a better quality of life.

*continued on next page*



The plan is intended to be comprehensive and to touch on every aspect of policy that affects housing in the Commonwealth.

Through the Lincoln Mews and similar communities, we have seen how a focus on preserving and revitalizing existing housing can create a rejuvenation of our communities. Successful models such as these needed to be replicated in communities across the Commonwealth. A state housing policy should foster and support innovative housing solutions.

Special attention will also be placed on addressing the needs of the homeless. The policy will focus on creating better coordination among state agencies and service providers to prevent homelessness and to address the needs of this vulnerable population.

Bob Sledd, the Governor's senior economic advisor, will be leading the committee tasked with developing this policy. Sledd brings a wealth of experience in affordable housing and homeless issues having served on the boards of the Better Housing Coalition, a



nonprofit housing development organization in Richmond and Homeward, a leadership organization to address homelessness in the Richmond region. The Virginia

Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), in collaboration with the Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA) is working closely with Sledd and other members of the advisory committee.

I know that many of you have advocated for a comprehensive statewide housing policy for a long time. We look forward to working with you to develop a policy that will address a range of housing issues and served the Commonwealth well for years to come.



## DHCD Developments

### Jeannette Walls to speak at 2010 Governor's Housing Conference

Columnist, author, speaker and television personality Jeannette Walls will serve as keynote speaker at the 2010 Governor's Housing Conference, to be held Nov. 17 – 19 in Richmond Virginia.

Walls is the author of *The Glass Castle*, an inspirational book that has been taught at universities in courses on literature, psychology, parenting, child development, and poverty.

The story describes growing up in the desert of the American Southwest and then in a West Virginia mining town with her three siblings and the brilliant, unorthodox, irresponsible parents who manage at once to neglect them, love them, and teach them to face their fears.

The book has been a New York Times best-seller for more than three years and was named one of the "Top 10 Books of the Decade" by Amazon.

She has spoken at colleges, corporations and business associations about overcoming hardship and the keys to turning adversity into advantage. She lives in the Virginia piedmont with her husband John Taylor, and has appeared on *Prime Time Live*, *Good Morning America*, *Larry King Live*, *Oprah*, and the *Diane Rheem Show*.

The 2010 Governor's Housing Conference will be held at the Richmond Marriott, and is Virginia's largest and most comprehensive affordable housing event of the year.

Registration is online now. Register by Sept. 24 for the best rate at: [www.vagovernorshousingconference.com](http://www.vagovernorshousingconference.com).



## Sign up for Facebook to connect with the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development



### Recent post:

**June 18 at 4:00pm**

Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development  
Today the Virginia Main Street blog highlights South Boston's Summer Theatre Celebration at The Prizery, bringing the performing arts to Virginia's historic downtowns.

**June 14 at 8:44am**

Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development  
Roanoke Times highlights community development success in Floyd.

**June 1 at 7:16am**

Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development  
June is National Homeownership Month - if you are thinking of purchasing a home consider the Virginia Individual Development Accounts (VIDA) program, which provides a two-to-one savings match to be used for a down payment. Find out more at: [www.dhcd.virginia.gov/vida](http://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/vida)

Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development  
600 East Main Street, Suite 300  
Richmond, VA 23219



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Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development Job opportunity at DHCD! The agency is seeking a community representative to oversee local government administration of the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG), the Indoor Plumbing Rehabilitation Program (IPR) and other state initiatives.



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follow us on  
twitter



## DHCD in the social media landscape

Several years ago the idea of Web sites such as Facebook and Twitter becoming mainstream communications vehicles for state, local and federal government agencies may have seemed like a fad. But with more than 400 million active users on Facebook, half of whom spend more than 55 minutes per day on the site, it is clear that Facebook and other sites such as Twitter, YouTube, and blogging platforms are here to stay.

Today our constituents do not have to go out to find the information they are looking for, it finds them.

Currently at least 13 state agencies are using Facebook, and more than 17 are on Twitter – communicating directly with

their audiences important information. For example, the Virginia Department of Transportation uses Twitter to communicate about road closings and issues during inclement weather (and to provide pothole repair updates!), the Virginia Department of Emergency Management also uses these platforms during times of crisis, and the Virginia Lottery sends out crucial numerical information to the state's players after every game.

DHCD has maintained a presence on YouTube since 2007, and expanded into blogging through the Virginia Main Street program shortly thereafter. The Virginia Main Street blog is targeted primarily to staff and volunteers in each of Virginia's 21 designated Virginia Main Street localities, sharing information and offering tips and assistance on promoting events, on

economic restructuring, design, development, and more.

In late 2009 the agency began utilizing Facebook and Twitter to communicate - advertising grant applications and workshops, sharing news stories and photographs from events, providing links to other interesting Blogs such as Energy Savers, and more.

With Generation Y already embracing the new social media platform, and the 55 – 65 year old demographic now the fastest growing on Facebook, DHCD is utilizing these sites to communicate more quickly and effectively with those interested in our programs.

To follow DHCD on Twitter, visit: [www.twitter.com/vadhcd](http://www.twitter.com/vadhcd), on Facebook visit: [www.facebook.com/vadhcd](http://www.facebook.com/vadhcd), on YouTube visit: .

## Community Events

### McDonnell establishes Virginia's first executive housing policy framework



On April 30 Governor McDonnell signed an executive order establishing the first executive housing policy framework for the Commonwealth of Virginia. The executive order was issued just days after McDonnell announced the initiative during a tour of the Better Housing Coalition's Lincoln Mews apartment community.

*"Affordable and safe housing is a fundamental component of healthy and prosperous communities - every Virginian deserves a safe, warm and secure residence to call their own," said McDonnell.*

The Governor's policy will address homelessness and expanding affordable housing, as well as workforce housing, economic development, healthy neighborhoods, effective coordination of transportation, environmental issues and other opportunities.

"Affordable and safe housing is a fundamental component of healthy and prosperous communities - every Virginian deserves a safe, warm and secure residence to call their own," said McDonnell. "In this tough economy it is harder than ever for many to attain this

basic necessity. Not only does this impact the quality of life of Virginians, housing also has direct implications for economic development, transportation, and the environment. Therefore, today I am announcing the establishment of the Commonwealth's first executive housing policy framework, which will be used as a guide

to establish our official housing policy which will be announced in the fall."

The Governor announced that his senior economic advisor, Bob Sledd, will chair a newly established Housing Policy Advisory Committee, which will develop the new policy. Sledd has worked on the board of nonprofit organizations such as the Better Housing Coalition and Homeward, Richmond's regional homeless services coordinator.

*Governor McDonnell meets with Willie Jones, a resident of Lincoln Mews*







"I have seen how integral housing is to the overall well-being of our fellow Virginians, and to our communities and our economy," said Sledd. "We hope to bring the insights of state agencies, communities and the private and nonprofit sectors together in development of this new policy, guiding future legislation and providing a framework for addressing

housing needs throughout the Commonwealth."

The policy framework will focus on recognizing the role housing policies play in economic development, creating healthy communities and encouraging energy efficiency. The policy framework will also focus on the changing demographics of Virginia's population and

on increasing the capacity to address the needs of homeless Virginians. The goal of the framework is to guide decision-making and bring coordination in matters affecting housing throughout executive branch agencies.

The Housing Policy Advisory Committee will be comprised of representatives from state government, private industry groups, local governments, and nonprofit housing providers and consumer representatives.

A final policy is expected to be completed by fall.



*Governor McDonnell talks with T.K. Somonoth, executive director of the Better Housing Coalition*



The Main Street Four-Point Approach® focuses on Organization, Promotion, Design, and Economic Restructuring.

## Virginia Main Street Celebrates 25 Years

of “Entrepreneurship and Investment on Virginia’s Historic Downtowns.”



In 1977 the National Trust for Historic Preservation launched a three-year demonstration effort, the Main Street Project. Seven years later Virginia became the 15<sup>th</sup> state to pursue the Main Street Model.

This year the program celebrates 25 years of “Entrepreneurship and Investment on Virginia’s Historic Downtowns.” On Thursday, March 25 more than 100 representatives from Virginia Main Street (VMS) designated communities and affiliates gathered to celebrate at the Milestone Achievement Awards at Lynchburg’s Craddock Terry Hotel. “For 25 years the Virginia Main Street program has

worked to strengthen the economic vitality of downtown commercial districts in hundreds of communities across Virginia,” said Shelton. “Through Virginia Main Street, these communities received the training and assistance they needed to focus on their unique heritage and attributes, and to develop strategies to create economic growth and community pride in their downtown areas.”

The VMS program uses the National Main Street Center’s Main Street Approach™, a strategy that uses community leaders to leverage the local assets of a community, including its unique history and culture, architecture and heritage to develop a comprehensive community revitalization effort.

The Main Street Four-Point Approach® focuses on Organization, Promotion, Design, and Economic Restructuring.

“It’s a comprehensive approach,” said Program Manager Jeff Sadler. “Revitalization of traditional commercial districts is more than making the buildings look good. There has to be a reinvention of the district’s economic purpose, and communities have to work hard to bring back shoppers, visitors and residents. And it takes a well-functioning community based organization to pull it together.”

This strategy has been effective in Virginia. The cumulative private investment in designated communities alone has surpassed \$638 million, correlating to an average of 197 new





*Eddie Bumbaugh of Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance describes how their community is putting the Main Street Approach to work at a 2009 Virginia Main Street training. The Virginia Main Street knowledge network helps share communities share strategies and best practices.*

businesses and 575 new jobs a year – meaningful economic growth.

“In 1985, it was the pioneer spirit that possessed Virginia’s first designated communities – including Bedford, Franklin and Winchester – to tap into the strategy,” said Shelton.

“This pioneering spirit is alive today, strengthening economies where new entrepreneurs can emerge and promising investment opportunities might arise.”

The approach depends on the ability of communities to work steadily over years toward incremental successes that build on each other. The communities of Warrenton and Orange received milestone awards at the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration for having invested in more than 500 rehabilitation projects, pointing to the fact that the Main Street Approach is also iterative; building stock in a

community needs ongoing investment.

“It’s one building, one block, one initiative at a time, and then you start back over again,” said Amy Gable, executive director of the Partnership for Warrenton Foundation. “The incremental approach of Main Street keeps us focused on our long-term outcomes.”

Those outcomes are measurable.

Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance Executive Director Eddie Bumbaugh frequently shares the numbers that demonstrate the community’s ongoing success.

“In 2009 alone, we had 15 new businesses open and 260 new downtown housing units come on the market or begin construction,” said Bumbaugh. “That translates to more people living and working downtown. Our economy is

stronger because of the Main Street Approach and our strong local investment.”

This year, Harrisonburg received a Milestone Award for more than \$40 million invested downtown since 2005.

In addition to the Milestone Achievement Awards celebration, VMS staff members are celebrating this year by encouraging Virginia residents to mark this year’s anniversary by shopping locally, by visiting one of the Virginia Main Street communities, and by selecting their favorite Main Street destination in an online poll.



*DHCD Director Bill Shelton speaks at the awards ceremony*

Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development  
600 East Main Street, Suite 300  
Richmond, VA 23219



“Each community in the Main Street program has a unique set of assets that make it special—and not just to those who live there, but to visitors as well,” said Sadler.

“We’ve identified *Twenty-five Treasures of Main Street* as a way to spark plans for a Saturday day trip or a weekend getaway – and encourage all to discover a new destination.”

The poll was available online at the Virginia Main Street Blog: [www.dhcdvms.wordpress.com](http://www.dhcdvms.wordpress.com) and was promoted through press releases, on Facebook and Twitter, and through other outlets. Luray’s Mimslyn Inn was inching in just behind Martinsville’s Big Chair at 39 to 41 percent, respectively.

Below is a listing of the **25 Treasures of Main Street**

## 25 Treasures of Main Street

### Three national landmark showplaces

1. Barter Theater, Abingdon
2. Lincoln Theater, Marion
3. Blackfriar’s Playhouse, Staunton

### Five top spots for arts and crafts

4. Fire House Gallery and Shop, Berryville
5. The Center for the Arts of Greater Manassas at the Candy Factory
6. Virginia Quilt Museum, Harrisonburg
7. The Prizery, South Boston
8. William King Museum, Abingdon

### Six historical highlights

9. Schwartz Tavern, Blackstone
10. A.P. Hill Boyhood Home, Culpeper
11. James Madison Museum, Orange
12. Waynesboro Heritage Museum
13. Old Jail Museum, Warrenton
14. Bedford City and County Museum

### Five historic hotels for a night’s rest

15. Martha Washington Hotel and Spa, Abingdon
16. Mimslyn Inn, Luray
17. George Washington Hotel, Winchester
18. Stonewall Jackson Hotel, Staunton
19. General Francis Marion Hotel, Marion

### Four Riverfront Parks

20. English Park, Altavista
21. Barrett’s Landing Riverfront Park, Franklin
22. Radford’s Bisset Park
23. Lynchburg’s James River Heritage Trail Riverwalk

### Two standout claims

24. The Big Chair, Martinsville
25. Gateway to the Crooked Road, Rocky Mount

### And one to grow on!

All of the various Farmer’s Markets on Main!

More complete tourism information is available from the communities, in the [Virginia Main Street Driving Tour Brochure](#) and the [National Park Service Main Street Travel Itinerary](#) online.

[Virginia Main Street YouTube video.](#)



## Heartwood reaches milestone

The topmost steel support beam for the Southwest Virginia Artisan Gateway, known as Heartwood, was hoisted into place on April 30, 2010 during a ceremony to commemorate the event. Stakeholders from all over Southwest Virginia were on hand to show their support for the project, scheduled to open in the summer of 2011.

The “Topping Out” ceremony is a tradition begun by ironworkers many years ago to celebrate a landmark in the construction process.

As called for by tradition, an American flag was attached to the steel beam and hoisted into place by crane.

“Heartwood was inspired by the spirit and character of Southwest Virginia,” said Todd Christensen, executive

director of the Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Commission. “When completed it will showcase the work of local artisans, provide a venue for musical performances, and act as the cultural hub of the region.”

Elements of agricultural buildings and structures, native to the settlers of this area, served as the inspiration for a distinctive and dynamic building designed by award-winning architects, Spectrum Design of Roanoke. The facility will be located on eight acres next to the campus of Virginia Highlands Community College.

The LEED Certified building will feature artisan galleries, a premium restaurant and food court with locally supplied organic fare, video portraits of musicians, craftspeople, and places to visit. Interactive maps of the region will highlight enticing destinations

for visitors and those considering relocation to our area

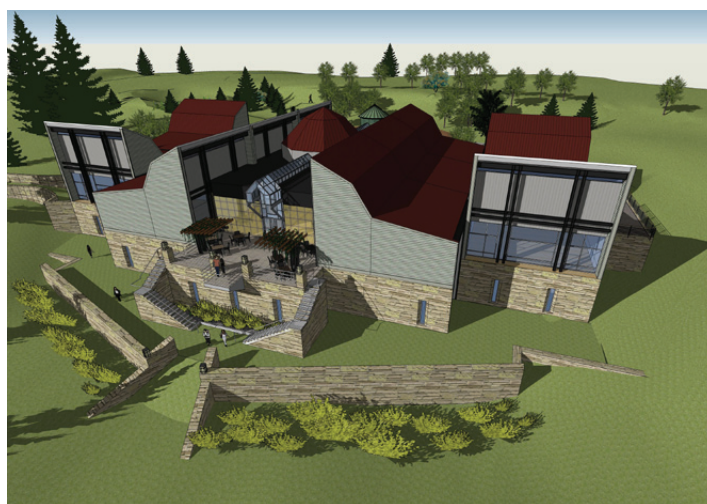
Heartwood is the latest and largest effort to market Southwest Virginia as a single, unified destination to benefit the economy of the entire region.

The building and its combined initiatives will contribute to a sustainable economy by highlighting the unique natural assets of the region so visitors, businesses and entrepreneurs can easily find what they seek. The facility will serve as the cultural and entrepreneurial introduction to the counties of Bland, Buchanan, Carroll, Dickenson, Floyd, Franklin, Giles, Grayson, Lee, Montgomery, Patrick, Pulaski, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise, and Wythe, and the cities of, Bristol, Galax, Norton and Radford.

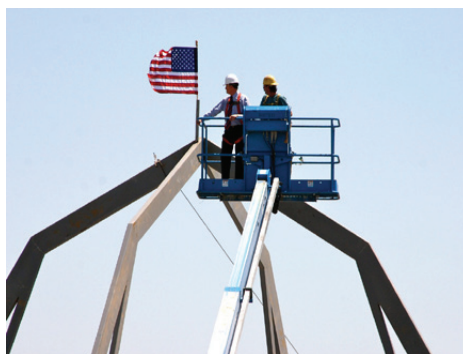


Just as Heartwood will be the physical symbol of the region's new "Creative Economy," the soon to be unveiled Southwest Virginia Web site will serve as a virtual gateway. The visually dynamic "electronic destination" will feature interactive trip planning services, providing visitors with information on where to stay, where to dine, and where to visit based on their interests.

"The site will feature vivid video profiles with stories of the people, the places and the activities which make Southwest Virginia unique," said Todd Christensen, executive director of the Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Commission.



The site will allow visitors to explore Southwest Virginia in three ways, geographically through interactive maps, by personal guide featuring residents discussing their favorite places to visit, and thematically, for travelers seeking a specific experience such as outdoor recreation, crafts, music, or other cultural destinations.



The Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Commission was established by the General Assembly in 2008 to be the coordinating body for the blend of cultural heritage tourism and economic development efforts in Southwest Virginia. The commission provides vision, guidance and marketing resources to sustain and grow the cultural heritage ventures related to tourism and other asset-based enterprises.

Heartwood is being developed and will be operated by the commission. Additional development partners included the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), 'Round the Mountain,

and the Virginia Tourism Corporation. The project is funded by the Virginia Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission, the Commonwealth of Virginia, DHCD in association with the Appalachian Regional Commission and Community Development Block Grant program, Washington County, the Town of Abingdon and the Virginia Highlands Community College.

In three years, it is estimated that Heartwood will attract more than 270,000 visitors, generate \$2.2 million in revenue and result in a total economic impact in excess of \$28 million to the region.

For more information visit: <http://www.heartwoodvirginia.org/>.

## Community Development Update

### From one Commonwealth to another, Atkinson takes the helm of community development at DHCD



Lisa Atkinson sees herself as a broker. A “packager of deals” looking beyond what is immediate, to what will make the most significant improvement in the quality of life and place for citizens in their communities.

In May, Atkinson joined the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) as the new deputy director of the Division of Community Development. She brings more than 25 years of experience in community development and in executive appointments from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Her focus on comprehensive solutions to community problems comes from her time as deputy cabinet liaison under Governor Tom Ridge. During her career in Pennsylvania, Atkinson worked closely with local government officials throughout the Commonwealth to determine their community development needs – her focus was on infrastructure improvement, job creation improved housing conditions, and other activities.

Atkinson found that the state had various resources to address many community development needs – however the localities were unaware of them or did not use them in combination to their full effectiveness. In turn, a resource guide for localities was developed outlining the programs and tools that the state offers to help in planning community development efforts.

She wants to bring this same mindset to work at DHCD.

“It’s about understanding the tools we have at DHCD, and beyond that, how to work with other entities – to see what resources are available,” said Atkinson. “It’s about understanding what other programs and services are out there that may be different, but compliment the work that we are doing.”

Atkinson is also a firm believer in promoting collaboration and regionalism.

“We are all working toward the same thing – to improve the quality of life in our communities,” said Atkinson. “To the extent that it makes sense, I don’t believe in recreating the wheel when I don’t have to. By working together, combining efforts, resources, collaborating, and thinking outside the box, we can make real progress.”

In her role as deputy secretary for community affairs and development at the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic



Development (DCED), Atkinson had responsibility for oversight of programs such as the Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP), Keystone Opportunity Zones, Enterprise Zones, LIHEAP/Weatherization, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), Family Savings Account Program and more.

"Lisa brings a combination of strong management skills and knowledge of community development programs that will be an asset to both DHCD and the communities we serve," said DHCD Director

Bill Shelton. "I've known Lisa for some time as we both served as Governor's alternates to the Appalachian Regional Commission. I know that with her experience and philosophy she will further the department's mission of creating partnerships for better communities."

Atkinson completed the Program for Senior Executives in State and Local Government at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and holds a bachelor's degree in public administration from Penn State-Erie.

## Neighborhood Stabilization Program turning foreclosures into homeownership opportunities

Virginia's Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) is turning vacant, foreclosed and potentially blighting homes into homeownership opportunities for Virginia's low, moderate and middle income families.

"The NSP has provided an opportunity for communities to address the impacts of foreclosure, to stabilize home prices, and prevent homes from becoming sources of blight," said DHCD Director Bill Shelton. "However the program is also focused on making these homes available for low, moderate and middle income families."

**DHCD received \$38.7 million for the NSP from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.**



Through the NSP, 22 local government and nonprofit organizations have been

working to acquire foreclosed properties at a discounted rate, rehabilitate them and make them available for resale to qualified homebuyers earning

up to 120 percent of the area median income.

Area homebuyers earning up to 120 percent of the area median income may be eligible. Eligible homebuyers may receive closing cost and other assistance to help make the homes affordable. NSP funds must be used

by September 17, 2010 - many grantees are now concentrating on identifying and qualifying eligible homebuyers in those areas of Virginia served by the NSP.

DHCD received \$38.7 million for the NSP from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Funds have been allocated through DHCD to local governments and certified nonprofits, which are negotiating the purchase of homes. All properties must be acquired at a minimum of one percent below as-is appraised value.



## NSP grantees are providing assistance in the following areas of the Commonwealth:

- **Northern Virginia:** Alexandria, Loudoun, Fauquier, Fairfax, Stafford, Prince William, Manassas, Fredericksburg, Caroline, Spotsylvania, Culpeper, Orange
- **Central Virginia:** Richmond City, Chesterfield, Louisa, Lynchburg, Petersburg
- **Tidewater/Hampton Roads:** Newport News, Hampton, Norfolk, Chesapeake, Suffolk, Portsmouth, Virginia Beach
- **Northern Shenandoah:** Warren, Frederick, Shenandoah, Winchester
- **Southside:** Franklin County, Danville
- **Southwest:** Bristol

The NSP was authorized under the Housing and Economic Recovery Act (HERA) of 2008 to provide emergency assistance to state and local governments in acquiring and redeveloping vacant and foreclosed properties that might otherwise become sources of abandonment and blight within their communities.

“We have seen 70 homes purchased by grantees through the program, and many more

are in the pipeline,” said Shelton.

The program has been featured multiple times in The Washington Post, Inside NOVA, The Virginian-Pilot and The Richmond Times-Dispatch.

For more information visit: [www.dhcd.virginia.gov/nsp](http://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/nsp).

Grantee and service area contact list can be downloaded from [this link](#)



Thomas Huffman, his wife Joeeste and their two children stand in front of their new home.



## Staunton family realizes dream of homeownership through VIDA

According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, experts estimate that a good credit rating will save the average borrower \$250,000 in interest over a lifetime. Whether its credit card interest, saving on down payments or security deposits, or on student loans, car loans, and more – having good credit means saving money.

National Homeownership Month is recognized each June, and this year the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has launched a campaign to encourage individuals or families thinking of homeownership to consider enrolling in the Virginia Individual Development Accounts (VIDA) program.

Through press releases, public service announcements, opinion/editorials and more, the campaign will focus on promoting responsible homeownership by individuals who have received financial management training

Through VIDA future homeowners are provided with financial literacy training and help with improving their credit score,” said Louellen Brumgard, DHCD associate director. “By helping individuals improve their credit and learn more about how to manage their money they are more prepared to take that next step into homeownership.”

Staunton resident Thomas Huffman and his wife had always dreamed of owning their own home. A machine operator at McQuay International, Huffman, his wife and two children heard about VIDA one night on the evening news.

“It sounded like a wonderful opportunity to get an extra boost toward becoming a homeowner,” said Huffman.

Through his local VIDA intermediary, Mercy House, Huffman enrolled in the program, saved \$2,000 on his own, and received a \$4,000 match through VIDA. The family

closed on their home in July of 2008, and have been proud homeowners for nearly two years.

“We were already at bare essentials,” said Huffman. “But we learned how to be frugal and find ways to increase our savings – to be more aware of what we put our money toward, and to focus on our goal.”

Studies show that a poor credit score can not only cost in interest, but may affect their finances in many ways including through higher insurance premiums, employment eligibility, higher security deposits on utilities, and more. Financial literacy education is key toward improving an individuals’ ability to purchase and sustain a home.

“Program graduates are always thrilled to be buying their first home,” said Brumgard. “But they also tell us that what they learned about keeping their finances in order is as valuable as the match they received to their savings.”

Eligible individuals must: be a U.S. citizen or legal alien; be employed; meet household income requirements; and must have a

dependent child under the age of 18 living in their home if saving for business or education. Interested individuals are encouraged to visit: [www.dhcd.virginia.gov/vida](http://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/vida) or call (888) VIDA-WIN for more information.

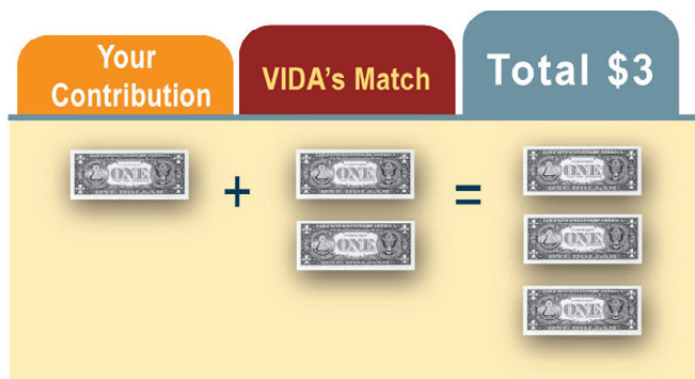
DHCD partners with various intermediary organizations, such as Mercy House that provide educational and technical assistance to help their clients through the program. More than 380 individuals have received financial management training under the program. Currently 411 individuals participate in VIDA, and 153 have graduated, obtaining their goal of homeownership, continued education, or business ownership.

VIDA is administered by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). VIDA is a partnership between DHCD, the Virginia Department of Social Services, the Virginia Housing Development Authority, and the U.S. Department to Health and Human Services – Office of Community Services’ Assets for Independence Grant.

# VIDA

Virginia Individual Development Accounts Program

**1 (888) VIDA-WIN**







## DHCD Division of Housing

### But for this assistance, these families may be homeless

James Lam, a skilled construction worker, never imagined he would need assistance with keeping his home. Sam Peak lost his job just as he and his pregnant wife moved into their first home. Lisa Spencer was diagnosed with stage-two cervical cancer after struggling through homelessness with five children.

Each of these individuals was helped through the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP), a new initiative authorized through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) designed to provide assistance and support to prevent homelessness or to assist those experiencing homelessness to be quickly re-housed and stabilized.

“HPRP funds are designed for individuals and families who would be homeless, but for this assistance,” said Kathy Robertson, associate director of homeless and special needs housing at the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).

“It is designed to serve as a true safety net.”

The HPRP is funded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban

Development (HUD). In Virginia, HUD provided funding directly to 13 entitlement communities, with \$11.4 million coming to DHCD to administer throughout non-entitlement areas of the state.

In the fall of 2009 DHCD awarded grants to 23 sub grantees serving these non-entitlement communities. At the end of March more than 3,900 individuals had been served, representing 1,568 households in the first two quarters of the program.

The program is temporary. Coming through the ARRA as part of the recovery act, the agency has only three years to administer the funds. This makes the program’s focus on case management more crucial.

For many families struggling through the recession, the program has provided the crucial “bump” they need to prevent them from becoming homeless.

In the fall of 2009 James Lam, who never thought he would need assistance supporting his family, found himself unemployed and unable to find work as a result of the recession.

Rebecca Peak and her family were able to stay in their home and get back on their feet because of the HPRP.



"We cut our expenses to bare-bone," said Lam. "Then it got worse when my unemployment payments ended."

In September of 2009 the Lams found themselves unable to pay their rent or utilities – and were using a local food pantry. Again in October, they found themselves unable to pay their bills. Soon they found themselves evicted.

Through Mercy House, an HPRP grantee serving the cities of Harrisonburg and Charlottesville, and the counties of Albemarle, Greene and Rockingham, the Lam's were relocated into new rental housing, assisted with a security deposit, first month's rent, and past-due utility bills from their previous residence. The Lam's used tax returns to supplement their HPRP assistance until Lam found a new job this spring.

"When the Lam's first came to Mercy House you could see that they were totally unprepared for their crisis and unknowledgeable about where to get help," said Jayne Kinhead, HPRP case manager. "They didn't know to apply for food stamps or ask social services for help. They depended on what they knew about the economy and when it didn't work the way they understood, they were at a loss as to what to do."

Now Kinhead is pleased to see the Lam's back on their feet. Since finding a new job the family has maintained their housing and continues to pay their bills on time.

"They are on their way to a fresh start," said Kinhead. "For them this program has gone a long way to stabilize their situation."

The same story can be told at Hope Inc., another HPRP grantee serving Amelia, Buckingham, Cumberland, Lunenburg, Nottoway and Prince Edward counties. Their clients Sam and Rebecca Peak had just moved into a new home when the recession left Sam without a job. Rebecca was pregnant with their second child and on doctor's orders to stay home.

Through Hope Inc. they received help with rent and utility costs. After receiving two months of assistance, Sam started a new full-time job, and the Peaks are now completely self-sufficient.

"We examined their budget and found ways to more efficiently use what resources they had on hand," said Michelle Eller, a counselor with Hope Inc. who worked with the Peaks. "We were able to keep this family in their home because of the HPRP, and they now have returned to being self-sufficient with a healthy new addition."

Virginia Supportive Housing (VSH), an HPRP grantee serving the cities of Petersburg, Hopewell and Colonial Heights, as well as the counties of Dinwiddie, Prince George, Charles City, New Kent, Hanover, Goochland and Powhatan, has seen HPRP not only as a crucial lifeline to families at risk of becoming homeless, but also as a life-saver for families who are already homeless.



VSH client Lisa Spencer was undergoing chemotherapy and extensive treatments for cancer, all the while struggling as a homeless single mother. Through the HPRP, she was able to move into an apartment with security and utility deposits paid, and is receiving rental subsidies through the program that are being re-evaluated every three months.

“Not only do we see families who have lost their jobs, but we are seeing individuals who are facing exorbitant medical bills,” said Katie VanArnam, director of housing access programs at VSH.

While she completed her final cancer treatment two weeks before Christmas, 2009, Spencer now has trouble walking - which doctors believe may be related to the extensive radiation treatments she received.

“This program saved my life,” said Spencer. “At one point, I thought to get through this I would have to give my kids up – if it weren’t for friends, family, support from the school and through this program I don’t know how I would have made it through.”

Through HPRP, VanArnam thinks that results will allow agencies already working toward preventing and ending homelessness to show that increased intervention works.

“It has been transformative,” said Katie VanArnam. “It is much easier and less expensive to help prevent someone from

becoming homeless. Now we are able to provide the financial assistance as well as the housing and support services to assist households with maintaining their permanent housing.”

To become eligible for HPRP, families must be at or below 50 percent of the area median income; must be either homeless or at-risk of losing their home – AND without appropriate subsequent housing options and without the financial resources and support networks available to obtain immediate housing or remain in existing housing.

Additionally, families or individuals receiving assistance must be evaluated and recertified every three months.

“Through the HPRP we’ve expanded our service area outside of the City of Richmond and into the surrounding metro area,” said VanArnam. “Unstable housing is not just an urban problem. These funds have allowed us to provide assistance in areas that have historically had limited services available.”

Individuals who are homeless or feel they may be at-risk of becoming homeless are advised to contact their local HPRP service provider directly to determine eligibility for services and schedule an initial consultation with a case manager. A listing of HPRP providers is online, however all grantees are required to provide services to eligible clients from any areas of the state.





## Weatherization program receives stimulus boost

Some months, Juanita Bell's utility bills would run upwards of \$400 for her modest 987 square foot home located in rural Powhatan County. Her niece, who lives in a 2,800 square foot brick rancher across the street – with an in-home beauty salon – paid less than half that amount.

But over the course of the next year, Bell is expected to save more than \$2,000 in utility costs because of the weatherization assistance she received through ElderHomes, a nonprofit agency receiving weatherization grant funds through the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).

ElderHomes installed a more efficient heating system into Bell's home, blew insulation into the sidewalls of her home, added weatherstripping to the doors, sealed leaks around windows, and added insulation inside the attic this June through the Weatherization Assistance Program.

"I'm just so thankful," said Bell.

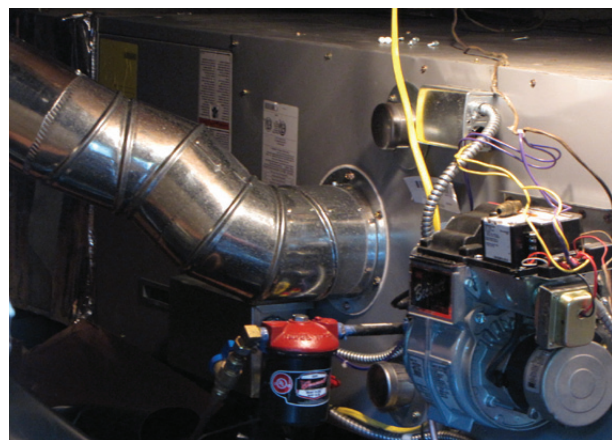
For Pam Palmore, director of energy conservation programs for ElderHomes,

the substantial difference in energy usage between Bell's home and that of her niece, is "a classic example of how energy inefficient many of the homes we see truly are."

Bell, who takes 22 pills a day plus insulin, lives on a fixed income and says she was barely keeping up with her utility bills. She learned about the weatherization program through the local department of social services.

"I will be so happy not to dread opening the utility bills each month," said Bell.

Bell will join more than 8,600 homeowners whose homes will be weatherized in the next three years because of a dramatic increase in funding. The state's Weatherization





Assistance Program has received more than 23 ½ times the normal yearly allocation through additional funding made available through the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act of 2009, known as ARRA.

Typically, the state received approximately 4 million dollars each year and was able to weatherize approximately 1,400 homes. Many nonprofit weatherization providers have consistently held lengthy waiting lists for the programs, however through the ARRA funding the state will be able to reach out to more families than ever.

“Previously, eligibility guidelines for weatherization limited us to serving families with incomes up to 150 percent of poverty,” said Shea Hollifield, deputy director of the Division of Housing for DHCD. “However today we can now serve families earning up to 60 percent of the state median income.”

This means that for example, previously assistance was limited to a family of four earning a maximum of \$31,800. Now, a family of four can earn up to \$47,048 and still benefit

from weatherization. Weatherization services for households that have elderly persons, individuals with disabilities, and families with children are given priority.

The program provides direct installation of energy-saving measures such as:

- Sealing air-leaks with insulation, caulking, and weather-stripping;
- Repairing leaky duct systems;
- Repairing and/or replacing inefficient or unsafe heating systems; and
- Installing carbon monoxide and smoke detectors.

The typical homeowner receiving weatherization services saves about 32 percent per year on their heating and cooling expenses. This typically amounts to \$300 - \$400 annually.

However for some homeowners, the amount of work needed to weatherize their homes exceeded the program's previous cap of \$3,000 as an average cost of each unit weatherized. The program requires homes to reach a minimum 30 percent savings after being weatherized, and if that level of energy savings can't be met within the cost-per-unit guidelines, the homes were ineligible.

“Unfortunately, our providers would simply have to walk away from some homes that had the most need, because the cost of achieving the targeted energy savings exceeded the limits on costs,” said Hollifield.

Today, that limit has been raised to \$6,500. With the new guidelines, DHCD expects more families will benefit from a higher level of weatherization and even greater energy savings. Juanita Bell will see an above-average savings thanks to the increased





amount of funding that can be used per home.

At the beginning and end of each weatherization, crews perform blower-door testing, and in some cases infra-red scanning to determine the amount and location of air leakage in the homes. Bell was experiencing a 61 percent air leakage in her home, which, through weatherization is now 81 percent more efficient – well above the 32 percent average.

The 22 nonprofit organizations that administer the weatherization program statewide have been ramping up their processes in order to prepare for the programs expansion.

“We already have systems in place, crews in place, and accounting practices in place,” said Hollifield. “Now it’s just a matter of expanding those systems and reaching out to a broader group of homeowners.”

Not only will increased weatherization help homeowners save on their energy bills – and use the savings to purchase food, medicine, or other needed items – it will also mean less energy usage and less dependence on foreign oil for the entire country.

“It has a three-fold impact,” said Hollifield. “It will save money for homeowners, reduce the nation’s energy consumption, and it will also create jobs.”

Based on preliminary information, DHCD expects increased weatherization spending to result in 435 jobs, resulting in \$37.8 million in additional spending in Virginia, \$2.8 million in state tax revenue, and \$2.3 million in local tax revenue.

The dramatic increase in funding and its potential for job creation is gaining attention from media outlets and elected officials.

Shea Hollifield has been featured in a number of interviews, from CNN to FOX, to Inside E-Street, a production of the American Association of Retired Person (AARP), which is available online.

*With the new guidelines, DHCD expects more families will benefit from a higher level of weatherization and even greater energy savings.*

*DHCD expects increased weatherization spending to result in 435 jobs, resulting in \$37.8 million in additional spending in Virginia, \$2.8 million in state tax revenue, and \$2.3 million in local tax revenue.*



## DHCD Division of Building and Fire Regulation

### Rodgers receives prestigious Bobby J. Fowler award

Deputy Director of the Division of Building and Fire Regulation Emory Rodgers has received the Bobby J. Fowler Award from the International Code Council (ICC) at the 2009 ICC Conference, held this year in Baltimore, MD.

The award represents the most prestigious of the ICC recognitions and is presented to an individual whose contributions to the building safety industry advance ICC's goals in achieving a safer built environment.

"Rodgers has worked tirelessly in the name of public safety in the Commonwealth of Virginia and nationwide," said Tim Ryan, ICC board member and chair of the ICC Awards Committee.

Rodgers has been a member of the ICC board, playing a major role in guiding the council through its inception, and remains a staunch supporter of I-Code adoptions.

"Emory has worked in state and local government for more than 35 years in the building code arena ensuring that Virginia's building codes address all areas of construction, understanding how important codes and code enforcement are to the everyday safety of Virginians," said Bill Shelton.

The award was named after the late Bobby Fowler, the first chairman of the ICC, an organization established to serve the building safety industry by providing a single, uniform set of model building codes for state, national and international adoption.

Rodgers has previously served as president of the legacy model building code organization Building Officials and Code Administrators, and on the board of the Virginia Building and Code Officials Association, the Building Officials Council of America (BOCA), the Council of American

The award represents the most prestigious of the ICC recognitions and is presented to an individual whose contributions to the building safety industry advance ICC's goals in achieving a safer built environment.



*Emory Rodgers (center), Deputy Director of the Building and Fire Regulation Division of the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, was presented the prestigious Bobby J. Fowler Award during today's Awards Luncheon by Code Council Board President Adolf Zubia (left) and Board member/Awards Committee Chairman James Ryan.*

Building Officials (CABO), and the National Institute of Building Sciences (NIBS).

"I am honored to receive this recognition from my peers," said Rodgers. "I encourage other building officials to work to bring together all viewpoints and strategies so we may continue to develop the best codes resulting in the safest built environment we can."

Previous award recipients have included Bob Weger, code consultant and former building official and director of the Clark County

(Nevada) Building Department; George Walker, Sr., retired building official for the City of Waco, Texas; Rick Vognild, retired director of technical services, Southern Building Code Congress International; Ron Nienaber, building official for the City of Maple Grove, Minnesota; Jim Sealy, fellow of the American Institute of Architects; and Paul Heilstedt, chief executive officer of Building Officials and Code Administrators International.

## Developing the statewide building and fire regulations – the 2009 code development cycle

*By Paula Eubank, associate director  
Division of Building and Fire Regulation*



Who decides what goes into the building codes that affect each of us everyday?

Do you ever think about the architects,

construction workers, and building inspectors that have worked to ensure the safety of the homes, offices, shops and other buildings we enter daily? What about the individuals who help write the building codes that these buildings must adhere to?

In the commonwealth, the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (VUSBC) governs the construction and safety of the buildings we live in, work in, and visit. Traditionally this code has been updated every three years through a process known as the "code development cycle."

The cycle begins with the adoption of "model codes" through the International Code Council, a nationally recognized model code safety organization that promulgates "model codes" for adoption across the United States and internationally.

"The ICC has an extensive process for developing the model codes," says DHCD deputy director of the Division of Building and Fire Regulation (DBFR) Emory Rodgers. "Their focus is on analyzing and debating changes and addition to the various building and fire codes, so that they can be presented for incorporation into our code, if adopted."

The codes promulgated by the ICC are known as I-Codes, and they themselves reference certain nationally recognized standards, such as those developed by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and other nationally recognized and accepted industry standards.



“The I-Codes are essentially the foundation for the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code,” said Rodgers. “Through the code development cycle we are able to adopt or amend the I-Codes into the latest version of the Virginia code.”

The code development cycle is governed by the Board of Housing and Community Development (BHCD) and administered by staff of the DBFR. Ultimately, however the board has ultimate responsibility for finalizing and approving Virginia’s building code.

DBFR staff administer the code development cycle by developing workgroups of citizens, stakeholders, and other affected parties (such as home builders and tradesmen) to review, vet and develop a consensus on the various code changes proposed. With eight building, fire, and related regulation titles to review, four to six workgroups are formed throughout each cycle reviewing nearly 200 code proposals. During the 2009 code cycle, three primary workgroups were established: the Administrative and Technical Work Group, the Virginia Uniform statewide Building Code and the Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code

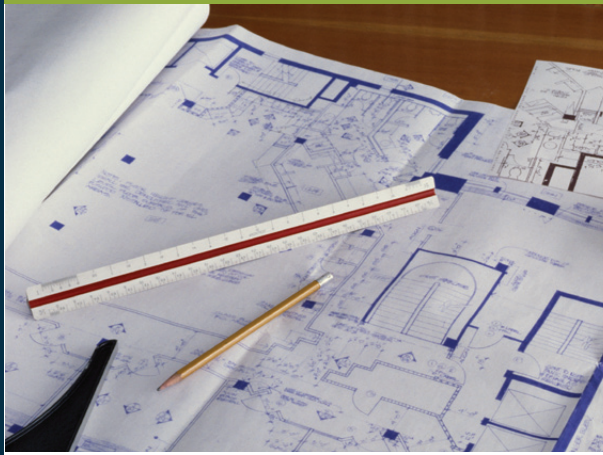
Workgroup, and the Virginia Residential Code Workgroup. Subsidiary groups were formed to review specific concerns such as energy conservation, residential sprinkler systems, and assisted living facilities.

Through this workgroup consensus process, individuals affected by proposed changes are given the opportunity to participate in the process.

“Anyone who has an interest in, or who may be affected by changes in the regulation can utilize this process to submit their opinions or recommended changes to the code proposals being considered to the workgroup, where it will receive a thorough consideration and discussion,” said Rodgers.

Throughout the process, staff from DHCD are working behind the scenes – publishing proposed regulations, coordinating public hearings, administering the 30-day public review and comment periods, and more. Once the workgroups have reached consensus, they report to the Codes and Standards Committee of the BHCD, which then must consider their recommendations and adopt the final regulations.





Throughout the current code development cycle DHCD staff continue to stay on top of new issues and trends that may impact future cycles, including items carried over from the current code cycle, building construction and fire prevention items targeted for state legislation, and controversial items at the forefront of state and national attention.

“The workgroups are able to invest a lot of time and focus to thoroughly analyze the code proposals they are given, and report back to the board,” said Rodgers. “This process allows us to more quickly adopt new codes into the existing codes and stay ahead of the curve.”

“Our goal is to develop regulations that are economical, effective, efficient, and that can be uniformly interpreted and applied throughout the state,” said Rodgers.

“However our foremost goal in all that we do is to ensure the safety of Virginians in the built environment.”

“Because of our approach, Virginia is known as a leader in code development nationwide.”

More information about the 2009 Code Change Cycle is available [online](#).

## New! Manufactured housing training program

From 1976 to 2000 the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) made virtually no changes to the regulations regarding the construction and installation of manufactured homes. However in 2000, thanks to diligent efforts from industry and consumer representatives, the Manufactured Improvement Act was passed in an effort to protect the quality, safety, durability and affordability of manufactured homes.

standards. Acting on HUD’s behalf, the State Administrative Agency (SAA) – DHCD, carries out the provision of this training to the installers.

As a result, DHCD’s State Building Code Administrative Office (SBCAO) is now administering the state’s Virginia Manufactured Housing Installation Program.

The act required that effective Jan. 1, 2009, all installers who are licensed or certified to perform manufactured housing installations complete training on the current federal installation



The development of the new program and certification involved an extensive process and partnerships across state agencies. DHCD worked with the Virginia Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation (DPOR) to inform licensed contractors of the new requirements, with local building departments who will inspect completed manufactured home installations, and through the SBCAO to administer the training.

“The intent of Virginia’s certification program is to have everyone involved,” said Emory Rodgers, deputy director of DHCD’s Division of Building and Fire Regulation, where the SBCAO is located. “We wanted manufacturers, dealers, installers and inspectors in the process, so we included them all in the training so they could interact with each other and discuss real life scenarios and problems.”

From July to November of 2009, approximately 500 contractors currently licensed through DPOR were provided with the training. The single day program consists of an overview of the administrative requirements in the state and federal regulations, a comprehensive review of the technical requirements of the Model Manufactured Home Installation Standards, and issues such as writing contracts, calling for inspections, and keeping



the required paperwork.

“The majority of installers knew how to perform the installations, however for most this was their first classroom instruction,” said Rodgers. “Lots of questions were asked and staff received significant feedback.”

Since the initial mass training, the class is now being offered twice per year for new contractors and others interested in the industry. Meanwhile, the SBCAO intends make readily available the information necessary to verify the proper installation of the manufactured housing.

“Our goal was to provide a better product in manufactured housing for consumers,” said Rodgers. “A major part of that is ensuring each home is installed per the manufacturer’s instructions, and working with installers on issues that they see and how to address those issues for the safest home possible for consumers.”

For further information regarding the HUD requirements or this training program, please contact Larry Brock at: [larry.brock@dhcd.virginia.gov](mailto:larry.brock@dhcd.virginia.gov) or (804) 786-1157.



# Agency Calendar

[http://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/AboutDHCD/DHCD\\_Calendar\\_of\\_Events.htm](http://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/AboutDHCD/DHCD_Calendar_of_Events.htm)

## Virginia Main Street Summer Toolkit: Cultivating an Entrepreneurial Downtown

**July 22 and 23**

Franklin Baptist Church  
208 North High Street, City of Franklin,  
Virginia

Wouldn't you like to have a downtown full of energetic and forward thinking businesses? In today's fast changing economy, success belongs to those nimble risk takers who understand that their job is to fill consumer demand; The Entrepreneurs.

Cultivating an Entrepreneurial Downtown is designed to help communities focus the Main Street Four Point Approach ® to entrepreneur and local business expansion for a thriving, home-grown, downtown marketplace. To build on the momentum of the program, at the end of day two the DHCD Project Management Office will host a Southern Virginia Downtown Interchange to bring together the region's fruitful minds and enterprising resources.

Join the Virginia Main Street network of downtown revitalization professionals and volunteers for these fast-paced, interactive events featuring the latest in successful business development strategies and town-raising entertainment in the heart of Franklin.

For more information >> [PDF](#)

Online registration >> [URL](#)

## Commission on Local Government meeting

**July 12, 10 a.m.**

The Virginia Housing Center  
Henrico Room 2  
4224 Cox Road  
Glen Allen, Virginia

Regular meeting of the Commission on Local Government to consider such matters as may be presented. For information, contact Susan Williams at: (804) 786-6508 or e-mail: [susan.williams@dhcd.virginia.gov](mailto:susan.williams@dhcd.virginia.gov).

## Manufactured Housing Board meeting

**July 15, 10 a.m.**

The Virginia Housing Center  
Henrico Room 2  
4224 Cox Road  
Glen Allen, Virginia

The regular meeting of the board is being held to address complaints against licensees, claims against the Manufactured Housing Transaction Recovery Fund, and other administrative responsibilities of the board. For more information, contact Lorenzo Dyer at: (804) 371-7163 or e-mail: [lorenzo.dyer@dhcd.virginia.gov](mailto:lorenzo.dyer@dhcd.virginia.gov).

## Board of Housing and Community Development

**July 26, 10 a.m.**

Virginia Housing Center  
4224 Cox Road, Glen Allen, VA

Business meeting of the Board of Housing and Community Development. The Codes and Standards Committee will meet prior to the full board meeting. For information, contact Steve Calhoun at: (804) 371-7015 or e-mail: [steve.calhoun@dhcd.virginia.gov](mailto:steve.calhoun@dhcd.virginia.gov).